

## NEWS

**For Immediate Release**

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### **STREAMLINED PORTFOLIO INCREASES EFFICACY**

ATLANTA, GA (May 1, 2009) The American College of Rheumatology Research and Education Foundation announces today that it has streamlined its core funding portfolio to more effectively meet the needs of junior or early career rheumatology physician-scientists and rheumatology health professionals.

“Typically, support for initial training comes from NIH-sponsored training grants and from REF development awards,” said Leslie J. Crofford, MD, REF president. “As research experience and accomplishment increase, young scientists continue to require mentoring but with an eye towards developing a more focused area of research that will take them to independence,” she continued.

Over the last several years, funding for the rheumatology research community has been in serious decline threatening the advancement of care for rheumatology patients. Therefore, the REF convened a task force and charged it with carefully and thoroughly reviewing the REF core awards and grants portfolio with respect to the efficacy and need for each award currently offered, as well as to consider needs for new grant mechanisms.

After careful consideration and with input from various constituencies, the task force concluded that it was necessary to reduce the number of awards offered by combining several mechanisms and making the application process more clear.

The streamlined portfolio represents the same commitment and the same balance of dollars between education and research that the REF has provided in the past—over \$4 million—but in a more simplified way that provides a clear path for young scientists to make the transition from postdoc to independent researcher.

The hope is to encourage medical students to enter the field of rheumatology, strengthen rheumatology training programs, and by advancing rheumatologic research and bring findings from bench to bedside, to ultimately improve patients' lives.

#### **About ACR Research and Education Foundation**

The ACR Research and Education Foundation was established in 1985 as a 501(c)(3) with a mission to improve patients' lives through support of research and training that advances the prevention, treatment and cure of rheumatic diseases. Since its founding, the REF has promoted and advanced the field of rheumatology by funding research, training and education opportunities for clinicians, students, health professionals, researchers and academic institutions. On average, 90 cents of every dollar donated to the REF is used to fund its extensive award and grant program. For more information, please visit [www.rheumatology.org/REF](http://www.rheumatology.org/REF).

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